

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

The undersigned attorney acknowledges with thanks the courtesy extended by Examiner Cantelmo during a telephone interview on March 31, 2004.

In Response to the Advisory Action and in light of conversation with the Examiner, Applicant has canceled claims 10, 11 and 18, and amended claims 8, 9, 12, 14, 15 and 16 to define more clearly the patentable invention Applicant believes is disclosed herein. Specifically, claims 8 and 14 have been amended to indicate that the tabbed weldment is welded together in a fashion "so as to minimize stress exerted on the current collectors and tabs during folding." It is respectfully submitted that such an amendment is supported by the specification on page 4, paragraph [0018] wherein Applicant indicates that an object of the present invention is electrically joining current collector tabs wherein the stress exerted on the layers of the battery is minimized. Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited references, alone or together, teaches, suggests or shows a tab weldment formed by the current collector tabs being welded together when the tabs are stacked together at a location offset from the cell body and are then folded into a generally U-shaped configuration about an axis within the surface of the cell body. It is respectfully submitted that a tab weldment formed in such a manner forms a unique structure that reduces the stress exerted on a current collector tab during folding.

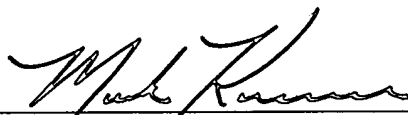
With respect to claims 9, 15 and 16, Applicant has amended the claims to indicate that a double layer of a metallic strip is disposed between the tab weldment and the cell body when the tab weldment is folded into a generally U-shaped configuration. As illustrated in FIGS. 6D, 6E and 6F, the metallic strip is folded over the current collector tabs prior to welding in a manner such that the metallic strip extends upward and over the cell body (see metal strip 122B in FIG. 6C). When the tab weldment is folded towards the cell body, two layers of the metallic strip are disposed between the tab weldment and the cell body. None of the cited references shows such a structure. For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 8, 15 and 16 are allowable.

For the reasons set forth in prior Responses, prior methods of forming tab weldments, wherein the tabs are welded together when they lie in the same plane as the cell body, exert considerable stress on the current collector tabs when they are folded up towards the cell body. It is respectfully submitted that a structure formed when the current collectors are assembled and welded at a location offset from the cell body and then bent up towards the body defines a unique structure, wherein the stresses on the current collectors as well as the current collectors tabs are minimized.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider the claims in their present form in light of the foregoing arguments, and allow the application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: April 7, 2004

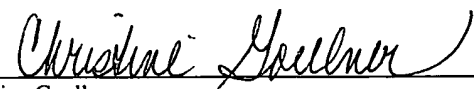

Mark Kusner, Reg. No. 31,115

KUSNER & JAFFE
Highland Place – Suite 310
6151 Wilson Mills Road
Highland Heights, Ohio 44143
(440) 684-1090 (phone)
(440) 684-1095 (fax)

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Date: April 7, 2004


Christine Goellner